

Book:	<i>Philippians</i>
Series:	<i>Rejoice in the Lord!</i>
Lesson 6:	<i>Gospel-Worthiness</i>
Text:	Philippians 1:27-30
Date:	October 6, 2013 (SF) October 13, 2013 (ABF)

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Date:	2013 — October 6 (SF); October 13 (ABF)
Next Lesson:	Philippians 2:1-11

Colonial Hills
ABF
Baptist Church

Key



= Teacher Information



= Discussion Starter



TEACHING TIP

Review last week’s lesson:

In 1:18b-26, Paul models an important lesson for us—when faced with unknowns, we must return to our purpose. We can get so sidetracked by what we *don’t know* in a situation, that we fail to recognize what we *do know* and what we *should do*. For Paul, the purpose of life was boiled down into two key goals, and he pursued those whether or not he knew what was ahead.

1. Purpose #1 — To Exalt And Enjoy Christ (vv. 18b-23)
 - The sureness of exalting and enjoying Christ (vv. 19-20) — God’s promise
 - The strength for exalting and enjoying Christ (v. 19) — the believers’ prayers & the Spirit’s provision
 - The spirit of exalting and enjoying Christ (v. 20) — unashamed power
 - The scope of exalting and enjoying Christ (v. 20) — a consuming passion
 - The sphere of exalting and enjoying Christ (v. 20) — our person
 - The secret of exalting and enjoying Christ (vv. 21, 23) — our priority
2. Purpose #2 — To Help And Hearten Christians (vv. 24-26)
 - Progress in the faith (v. 25) — help
 - Rejoice in the faith (v. 25) — hearten
 - Glory in Christ (v. 26) — honor

INTRODUCTION

This passage marks a change in focus from the autobiographical content of 1:1-26 to a congregational focus in 1:27ff. Paul has modeled for us Christian affection (1:1-8), a prayer for perfection (1:9-11), a godly perspective on challenges (1:12-18a), and how to face the unknown with purpose (1:18b-26). Now Paul begins to exhort the Philippian believers, issuing them specific commands. But there is certainly no, “Do what I say, but not what I do” here, for he has already been practicing what he preaches. And remember, he previously affirmed that he will “remain and continue with” them, “for [their] progress and joy in the faith” (v. 25). So, Paul is simply calling for them to cooperate with his ministry among them.

D. A. Carson laments, “In all ages—and not least today—the greatest hindrance to the advance of the gospel has been the inconsistency of Christians.”¹ Paul’s first exhortation addresses such inconsistency and echoes his personal purpose that he had affirmed in verses 19-23. He devoted himself, even in the midst of the unknowns of life, to exalting and enjoying Jesus. Now, his passion is that these believers would do the same, that they would “let [their] manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ” (v. 27). The word “only” reflects Paul’s overall ambition for these believers. Just as he was concerned about only “one thing” for himself (1:21; 3:13, 16), he calls these believers to one priority—living worthy of the gospel. That word “only” further suggests that the Philippian believers would have “ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus” (v. 26), “only” if they “let [their] manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ” (v. 27).

Our entire passage very clearly hinges on this first exhortation from Paul, and we could really say that it is the foundation of all the others that follow in this letter. *Brothers and sisters, we must follow Paul’s example in his commitment to Christ (i.e., review Lesson 4-5, 1:12-26) and conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.*

Paul has yet to really explain the gospel in this letter. He’s referred to it eight times already² and referenced its benefits five times (vv. 2, 6, 10, 19, 23), but we’ll have to wait until 2:5-13 and 3:4-21 to really understand its beauty. When we do, we discover that the gospel is of immense value and something that must be protected and promoted in the way we conduct our lives.

Paul, then, is evidently taking for granted that these Philippian believers were familiar with the gospel and would be motivated by it to live worthy of it. Likewise, we’ll assume that we are familiar with the “good news” of who Jesus is, what He has said, and what He has done, and we’ll allow that sweet understanding to compel us to follow Him in a manner worthy of Him. Throughout this lesson, *our goal will simply be to use our text to explain, illustrate, and apply this simple exhortation to conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel.*

EXPLANATION

This idea of a life worthy of the gospel is common throughout the New Testament.

Ephesians 4:1 — “I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a *manner worthy* of the calling to which you have been called.”

Colossians 1:10 — “So as to walk in a *manner worthy* of the Lord, *fully pleasing* to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

1 Thessalonians 2:12 — “We exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a *manner worthy* of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.”

1 Thessalonians 4:1 — “Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to *walk* and to *please* God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more.”

Titus 2:10 — “Showing all good faith, so that in everything [believers] may *adorn* the doctrine of God our Savior.”

Clearly, then, while believers are certainly secure in Christ (1:6), they can at any given moment either be walking worthy of the gospel or not, either pleasing Christ or not. Striving to please God and walk worthy of Him, then, is not legalism. It should be the lovingly obedient response of every gospel-graced individual.

What does Paul mean by living “worthy of the gospel”? Well, if the gospel is “the power of God for salvation” (Romans 1:16), then living “worthy” of it is living in such a way as to display God’s power to save. MacArthur writes, “[Paul] calls on the Philippians to maintain their spiritual commitment, to continue to behave in a way that is consistent with the power of the gospel. He calls them to look carefully into their own hearts to determine if they have spiritual integrity.”³

Paul models this with vivid clarity. In Philippians 4:9, he invites the Philippian believers to “practice [the] things” they had “learned and received and heard and seen in me.” He knew that every facet of his life had been devoted to exalting and enjoying Christ, and so he offered every part for the spiritual benefit of those believers. Paul lived a life of gospel-integrity, gospel-worthiness. This kind of living cooperates with God (cf. 1:9-11; 2:12-13) to bring harmony between one’s profession and one’s practice, as every area of life is surrendered to the power of God’s saving Word (2 Timothy 3:14-17). And what is at stake here is nothing short of the honor of Jesus Christ (cf. v. 28). Merely saying that God is powerful to save and satisfy is one thing; authenticating that assertion by living it out in every dimension is an entirely different matter—and those who are watching know that best of all.⁴

Paul returns to this same concept in Philippians 2:15-16, where he expresses his burden that these believers “be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the Word of Life.” Here we learn that

while the gospel itself is the motivation for this worthiness (i.e., we are now “children of God”! cf. Colossians 3:12), God’s Word (i.e., the “Word of Life”) is the standard. We will not live gospel-worthy lives, unless we are comparing ourselves only to the image and will of God found in Scripture (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:18).

Furthermore, the end of Philippians 1:16 demonstrates that if these believers failed to practice such gospel-worthiness, then Paul’s ministry among them will have been in vain. Thus, gospel-worthiness is necessary, not only for the honor of Christ, but also for the joy of His people.

One final observation needs to be noted. Paul’s desire is that “whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear” of their gospel-worthiness (v. 27). Paul demonstrates, then, that gospel-worthiness should be internally motivated, but externally expressed. He doesn’t want his accountability to be what makes them live worthy of the gospel. He wants them to do so whether he visits them or not. He wants their lifestyle to be the natural response to their personalized appreciation for and submission to the gospel. And, when it is, he knows he’ll “hear” about it, for it will spill out of their hearts and into their habits.

Transition: We must conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ. While we’ve explained what that means, let’s deepen our understanding by illustrating gospel-worthiness.

ILLUSTRATION

The word Paul uses for our English phrase “let your manner of life” comes from the root word, *polis*, meaning “city,” and refers to being a citizen (lit. “live or behave as citizens”; cf. Philippians 3:20). Philippi was a Roman colony (cf. Act 16:12), which was a rare privilege for a city outside of Italy. As such, its citizens enjoyed Roman citizenship, tax exemption, and Roman government, while also adopting Roman dress, names, and language (i.e.,

Latin). So, when Paul encouraged these particular believers to “live as citizens” in gospel-worthiness, it is possible that he was painting a picture for them that would uniquely resonate.

MacArthur explains:

Roman society, like Greek society before it, was highly community-conscious. The individual was subordinate to the state, and a person’s skills, talents, energy, and endeavors were devoted first of all to the interests of society at large. It was not a coerced subjection, as in modern totalitarian states, but was based on a willing sense of interdependence in which citizens took great pride. A responsible citizen was careful not to do anything that would bring disrepute on his polis. And he tried always to be considered an honorable citizen, so that he would never be removed from the list of citizens.⁵

Whether or not Paul had that sense of dedication in mind, it at least illustrates what Paul is calling them to here. “If the citizens of Philippi were so devoted to the honor of their human kingdom, how much more should believers be devoted to the kingdom of Christ (cf. Col. 1:12-13)? Therefore, Paul charged them to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, to live as faithful citizens of heaven (cf. 3:20 [Hebrews 11:10]).”⁶ “The Philippians were to live out what they were—like an unbowed African slave who towered above his manacled comrades—the son of a king, and he could not forget it! ‘Philippians, live out your blood-bought, heavenly citizenship.’”⁷ Considering all that we are and all that we have in Christ through the gospel, what a shame it is when we fail to walk worthy of it.⁸

Illustration: We can further illustrate this concept of “conducting ourselves worthy of the gospel” (the the resulting shame when we fail to do so) by considering Job.

In the astounding first two chapters of that book, we discover just how vast is the audience assessing the gospel-worthiness of believers. As Ephesians 3:10 reminds us, gospel-shaped people are displaying God’s multifaceted wisdom “to the rulers and

authorities in the heavenly places,” and when they fail to do so, they blaspheme the reputation of God (cf. Titus 2:5, 7, 10).

The story begins by God actually affirming the “gospel-worthiness” of Job. God pleurably looks at Job and asks Satan (who is subordinately accounting of himself to God, vv. 6-7), “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?” (v. 8; cf. 2:3). What a testimony to have God say about a person! God who knows the heart validates Job’s spiritual integrity with a statement that we would all long to hear. That statement, however, while undoubtedly being enabled by God’s effectual grace toward Job (John 15:5), was the divine response to Job’s own concentrated obedience (vv. 1, 5). Job maintained his spiritual integrity, determining to walk worthy of the Lord (i.e., he “feared God”), and as a result he actually pleased God and earned the praise of God (cf. Zephaniah 3:17).

Job’s gospel worthiness is even more astounding when you consider Satan’s immediate challenge in 1:9-11—

Does Job fear God for no reason? Have You not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse You to Your face.

Satan attributes Job’s apparent godliness to God’s kindness towards Job and insinuates that lying underneath the veneer of integrity was the vice of idolatry—i.e., that Job served God only as long as it got him what he wanted. Because many of us are all too familiar with such hypocrisy, it is easy for us to suspect the same of Job. God, however, knowing Job’s true character, allows Satan to test that theory, not once, but twice, and the second time in league with Job’s wife (cf. 2:4-5, 9).

Against both onslaughts, Job maintains his gospel-worthiness and submits himself to the inscrutable, yet sovereign goodness of God (1:21-22; 2:10). And in those moments, Satan’s brazen and

slandorous insinuations were abruptly silenced, and the glory of God was extolled throughout the host of heaven.

Now, can you imagine what blasphemy would have rung throughout the halls of heaven if Job had failed to “conduct himself worthy of the gospel of Christ”? God’s power would have been slandered, His sufficiency ridiculed, His work undermined, His plan mocked. Scripture suggests that such a scene has indeed been played out in the courts of heaven (cf. Mark 8:31-34; Luke 22:31-34; Mark 14:66-72) many times, but Calvary has covered even those failures for those who will find forgiveness and restoration there. But, oh, what shame is discovered for the believer at those times! When we fail to “walk worthy of the gospel of Christ,” we do incalculable damage to the reputation of Christ and we fail to reap the benefits promised to those who are not ashamed.

Job was careful to “to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Colossians 1:10). It is no surprise, then, that he was later “strengthened with all power, according to [God’s] glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy” (Colossians 1:11) and that his life legacy was one of “giving thanks to the Father” (Colossians 1:12). He purposed to exalt and enjoy God, inasmuch as God was truly magnified in his life; and thus, he, in turn, was honored by God both at the beginning (Job 1:8; 2:3) and at the end (Job 42:10-17). Cf. James 4:6-10; 1 Peter 5:6-11.

Will you live for the glory of Another? Will you conduct yourself in such a way as to protect and promote the reputation of Another? Will you rejoicingly revel in His sufficient gospel-goodness to you to such a degree that *He* is honored when people look hard at *your* life? The people are watching! The hosts of heaven are watching! What do they see and what will they hear? The testimony of God extolling your gospel-worthiness? Or the laughing scorn of Satan defaming the One you say you love?

Oh, may we not be ashamed before Him—no, not with our lips or with our lives! Oh, may we yearn to please Him so that His smile

rests upon us (cf. Psalm 25:14)! And, oh, may we earnestly beseech God for His help in this even as He has promised! Let us pray Paul’s prayer for perfection (1:9-11, 19), for ourselves and for our faith-family. And let us claim His power to make us gospel-worthy.

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. (Jude 24-25)

Transition: Brothers and sisters, for Jesus’ sake, we must conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. We have explained and illustrated this, but our application will help us pinpoint how to do this. As we apply this Bible study, let’s consider four marks of gospel-worthiness.

APPLICATION

Before we jump into these marks, let us simply recognize how good and simple God has been to us here. He has provided two “tools” by which we can have confidence and not shame (cf. vv. 19-20) as we strive to “conduct ourselves worthy of the gospel of Christ.” First, the power of God guarantees our gospel-worthiness (cf. vv. 19-20; Jude 24; 1 Peter 1:5-7; 5:10). Second, the plan of God guarantees our gospel-worthiness—that is, if we simply obey His Word (cf. 2:15-16), we will “shine as lights in the world.” We’ve consider the first “tool” in some detail in our previous lesson. As we apply this lesson, we’ll concentrate on the second “tool.”

1. ***Resolve (v. 27)***

Paul states that their gospel-worthiness would be authenticated by him hearing that they were “standing firm” (cf. 4:1). MacArthur notes that this word was literally used to reference “steadfastly holding one’s

ground regardless of danger or opposition,⁹ as in “a soldier who defended his position at all costs, even to the point of sacrificing his life.”¹⁰ Thus, it was used figuratively to refer to being “firmly committed in conviction or belief.”¹¹ 1 Corinthians 16:13 captures this idea well—“Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.” Other verses add to our understanding of gospel-worthy resolve.

- *Romans 14:4* — Our resolve is accompanied by God’s resolve.
- *2 Thessalonians 2:15* — Our resolve should be Word-centered.
- *Galatians 5:1* — The alternative to resolve is slavery.
- *Ephesians 6:11-13* — Our resolve is enabled by putting on the full armor of God, which indeed must be done because our battle is spiritual.
- *1 Corinthians 9:27* — Our resolve requires active discipline. We resolve, not only to stand for God, but also to stand apart from sin.

Rather than just reading through the bulleted list below, ask, “What do we learn about resolve in the following verses?”

Application: Brothers and sisters, we must be resolved in our commitment to truth (theology) and godliness (obedience). If the test of your character is what it takes to stop you, then how is your character?

2. Unity (v. 27)

A second mark of gospel-worthiness is seen in the following two modifying phrases, “In one spirit, with one mind.” While “one spirit” could refer to the Holy Spirit, the phrase “one mind” (lit. “one soul”; different from the word used in 2:2) which follows and Paul’s prayer for these

believers’ spirits in 4:23 suggests that he’s referring to their attitude and mindset (cf. Acts 4:32). Paul is exhorting them to walk worthy of the gospel by practicing the kind of unity illustrated throughout the New Testament as a “household” (Ephesians 2:13-14, 18-22) or “body” (Romans 12:4-5, 16). Such harmonious, others-centered living was vividly modeled by the early church in Jerusalem (Acts 2:44-46):

And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts.

Lesson 7 will focus much more thoroughly on this mark of gospel-worthiness, as Philippians 2:1-11 continue to address the issue of unity. However, let us briefly consider several other verses that show us what this “one spirit”/“one mind” looks like.

- *1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:3-6* — Practical unity should happen because positional unity has happened.
- *John 17:21-22* — Unity is a crucial part of witness.
- *1 Corinthians 6:17* — We will share the “same spirit” with one another only insofar as we are “one spirit with the Lord.”
- *Romans 12:4-5, 16* — Humility is a necessity to unity. Diversity should not be a hindrance to unity.
- *1 Corinthians 1:10* — We should work at agreeing and connecting.

Rather than just reading through the bulleted list below, ask, “What do we learn about resolve in the following verses?”

- *Galatians 5:13, 15-16; Ephesians 4:32* — We can enjoy practical unity when we walk in the Spirit, actively determine to serve others, and glory in the forgiveness offered by Christ.

When we are unified, then the Person of Christ is magnified and not the personalities of Christians. Indeed, then, unity is a mark of gospel-worthiness.

Application: In the book “Gospel in Life,” Tim Keller breaks down the teaching of the 50-60 New Testament “one another” passages, in order to help us cultivate a community of “one spirit and one mind.” His outline is helpful and should provoke some necessary evaluation on our part.¹²

- *The first three practices are all about affirming one another—about how to be friends.*
 - *Practice 1 — affirming one another’s strengths, abilities, and gifts (Romans 12:10; James 5:9; Romans 12:3-8)*
 - *Practice 2 — affirming one another’s equal importance in Christ (Romans 15:7; 1 Corinthians 12:25; 1 Peter 5:5; James 2:1)*
 - *Practice 3 — affirming one another through visible affection (Romans 16:16; Ephesians 4:32; 1 Thessalonians 3:12)*
- *The next three community-building practices are all about sharing with one another—about how to be family.*
 - *Practice 4 — sharing one another’s space, goods, and time (Romans 12:10; 1 Peter 4:9; Galatians 6:10)*
 - *Practice 5 — sharing one another’s needs and problems (Galatians 6:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 3:13)*

- *Practice 6 — sharing one another’s beliefs, thinking, and spirituality (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19; Romans 12:16; 1 Corinthians 1:10)*

- *The last three community-building practices are all about serving one another—about how to be servants.*

- *Practice 7 — serving one another through accountability (James 5:16; Romans 15:14; Ephesians 4:25)*
- *Practice 8 — serving one another through forgiveness and reconciliation (Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13; Galatians 5:26; James 4:11; Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15)*
- *Practice 9 — serving one another’s interests rather than our own (Hebrews 10:24; Romans 15:1-2; Galatians 5:13; Philippians 2:4, 20-21)*

Ask your group, “Which category is our church currently best at? Worst at? What can we do to get better?”

3. **Ministry (v. 27)**

The next mark of gospel-worthiness is seen in the phrase, “Striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.” The word underlying this is Gk. *sunathleo*, and you can see in it the root term from which our words “athlete” and “athletics” are derived. The word means to contend, struggle, or compete in a contest (cf. 2 Timothy 2:5). The addition of the prefix, *sun*, demonstrates that Paul has in mind a “striving with” rather than “striving against.”

“Paul stresses here the positive relationship of believers with each other. More than one athletic team with many outstanding players has failed to win a

championship because most of those players concentrated on their own success rather than the team's. A less talented team can often win against one that is more talented because the weaker team works efficiently together to achieve a common objective. A player with outstanding talent may be temporarily sidelined or even put off the team, because, impressive as his individual efforts might be, he does his team more harm than good. Striving together in the church means playing as a team to advance the truth of God."¹³

We can't fight for the gospel (1:5, 7, 16), if we are fighting each other (2:1-4; 4:1-2). The enemies are real (3:1ff), but they shouldn't be "one another." We all need to reconcentrate our focus on "the faith of the gospel"—participating in it (1:5), defending it (1:7), confirming it (1:7), boldly speaking it (1:14), magnifying it (1:20), and adorning it (1:27)—so that we will be united around a common goal, the correct goal. It's been commonly noted that "spectators become critics"; but those who "strive side by side for the faith of the gospel" will form companions, and together, they will walk worthy of the gospel.

Application: In what ways are you "striving for the faith of the gospel"? In what ways are you "striving side by side for the faith for the faith of the gospel"? If you are only doing the "church thing" without really engaging in mission (i.e., "the faith of the gospel"—i.e., evangelism and discipleship), then you are not "conducting yourself worthy of the gospel of Christ."

4. **Boldness (vv. 28-30)**

The last mark of gospel-worthiness is uncovered in verses 28-30 and summarized in the first phrase, "And not frightened in anything by your opponents." Here in this

Roman colony, saturated deeply with the pagan practices of Roman society, the believers certainly had plenty of opponents. Paul exhorts these believers to the same unashamed confidence that he exhibited in verse 20, when he tells them to "Paul tells the Philippians to "not [be] frightened in anything by your opponents." "How could they not be afraid? The rare Greek word used here was employed elsewhere for startling horses into a stampede. It describes a panic reaction. Don't panic, advises Paul. Keep your head. You're a citizen of Heaven. God is in control. Don't be intimidated."¹⁴ To help them maintain their confidence in adversity, Paul offers these believers two reasons why they should cultivate boldness. One reason has to do with the result of boldness; the other reason has to do with the cause of boldness.

a. **A sign (v. 28) — Our boldness affirms God's power.**

First, we should cultivate boldness because it affirms God's power. This is what Paul teaches in verse 28 with the phrase "a sign," "which refers to proving, or giving evidence, that something is true."¹⁵ So, Paul says, our boldness indicates that our opponents are destined for destruction, not us—for if we have maintained our courage through the power of Christ, then our unshaken faith in the wake of their fiercest onslaughts marks them as those heading in the wrong direction (2 Thessalonians 1:4-8). When we are bold, God's power is manifested to both us and our opponents, for we have walked in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. D. A. Carson has written:

Your change in character, your united stand in defense of the gospel, your ability to withstand with meekness and without fear the opposition that you must endure, constitutes a sign. That sign speaks volumes, both to the outside world and the Christian community. It is a sign of judgment

*against the world that is mounting the opposition; it is a sign of assurance that these believers really are the people of God and will be saved on the last day.*¹⁶

b. A gift (vv. 29-30) — Our suffering affirms God's sovereignty.

Secondly, we should cultivate boldness because our suffering affirms God's sovereignty. The logic in verses 29-30 is really quite simple—since you are suffering (v. 30), and since Paul knew suffering to be divinely orchestrated (vv. 12-18a), then your suffering is because God has granted it to you (v. 29). The word “grant” “is from *charizō*, which is from the same root as the noun *charis* (grace) and literally means ‘to give, render, or grant graciously.’”¹⁷ While the grace of suffering doesn't sound as appealing as the grace of believing, the wise believer will meditate upon this grace of suffering and glean the benefits:

Karl Barth explains: “The grace of being permitted to believe in Christ is surpassed by the grace of being permitted to suffer for Him, of being permitted to walk the way of Christ with Christ Himself to the perfection of fellowship with Him” [cf. 3:10]. The fellowship of Christ's sufferings moves the believer beyond the role of beneficiary of Christ's death to a sharer in His sufferings (cf. Colossians 1:24). The suffering that comes to a Christian (as a Christian) is not a sign of God's neglect but rather a proof that grace is at work in his or her life. As Paul would tell Timothy, “Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Timothy 3:12).¹⁸

Furthermore, God's Word makes it clear that suffering “for His sake” “provides the reward of future glory

(Rom. 8:17; 1 Peter 4:12-16)” (cf. Mark 10:29-30; Philippians 3:7-9; Romans 5:3-5; 8:17; James 1:2-4).¹⁹

Application: Consider John Calvin's application of this mark of gospel-worthiness:

“Oh, if this conviction were fixed in our minds, that persecutions are to be reckoned among God's benefits, what progress would be made in the doctrine of godliness! And yet, what is more certain than that it is the highest honour of the Divine grace, that we suffer for His name either reproach, or imprisonment, or miseries, or tortures, or even death, for in that case He decorates us with His insignia. But more will be found who will order God and His gifts to be gone, rather than embrace the cross readily when it is offered to them. Woe, then, to our stupidity!”²⁰

CONCLUSION

In several plays, Shakespeare traces the life of King Henry V, who, upon the passing of his father the king, begins to change from young, vain, decadent prince to thoughtful, humble, careful king. When the crown is passed to him, he recognizes that he had done nothing to earn it, but rather, he says to his dying father, “You won it, wore it, kept it, gave it me.” That understanding is soon followed by a personal vow to live a life worthy of the crown:

*The tide of blood in me
Hath proudly flowed in vanity till now.
Now doth it turn and ebb back to the sea,
Where it shall mingle with the state of floods,
And flow henceforth in formal majesty.*

We've considered gospel-worthiness in this lesson, and may we individually echo the sentiments of King Henry V, yet in a deeper, spiritual way—“Let the tide of blood in me (the life of Christ) flow henceforth in formal majesty. Let me conduct myself in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.”²¹

ENDNOTES

¹ D. A. Carson et al., eds., *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, 4th ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 1252.

² “Gospel” 4x, “Word” 1x, “preach” or “proclaim” Christ 3x

³ John F. MacArthur Jr., *Philippians*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 83–84.

⁴ In Lesson 5 of our study through Titus, we stated the following:

“[1] Throughout this little epistle, God is primarily revealed to be a saving God (cf. Titus 1:3, 4; 2:10, 13; 3:4, 6). That role is His chief manifestation to man throughout Scripture (cf. Isaiah 12:2; 43:11; 45:21; Matthew 1:21; Luke 2:28-30; 3:6 [Isaiah 40:5]; 19:10; John 1:14, 16; I Timothy 2:3). And the major message God wants to communicate to the world is that He can save.

[2] The way He communicates that is to demonstrate it through saved people (Titus 2:1-10; cf. Romans 1:16-17), and if saved people don’t act like saved people then God’s not getting His message across—they are hindering it (Titus 2:5, 8, 10). Saved people, then, become the evidence that God can save.

[3] God wants to reach the lost with convincing evidence, and the key to that evidence is in transformed lives. As we live saved lives, we will be lights to God’s salvation (cf. Daniel 2:3; Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:15). Obviously, we must speak the truth (Titus 1; cf. Romans 10:14-17), but getting someone to listen to it is dependent upon the demonstration of its power they’ve seen in the life of believers.”

⁵ MacArthur, 84.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 85.

⁷ R. Kent Hughes, *Philippians: The Fellowship of the Gospel*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 66.

⁸ Consider another *Illustration* — “My wife and I were visiting in London and one day decided to go to the zoo. We boarded the bus and sat back to enjoy the ride; but it was impossible to enjoy it because of the loud, coarse conversation of the passengers at the front of the bus. Unfortunately, they were Americans; and we could see the Britishers around us raising their eyebrows and shaking their heads, as though to say, ‘Oh, yes, they’re from America!’ We were embarrassed, because we knew that these people did not really represent the best of American citizens” (Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 [Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996], 71).

⁹ MacArthur, 86.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 944.

¹² Timothy Keller, *Gospel in Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 58-70.

¹³ MacArthur, 91.

¹⁴ Hughes, 68.

¹⁵ MacArthur, 93.

¹⁶ Hughes, 69.

¹⁷ MacArthur, 95.

¹⁸ Hughes, 70.

¹⁹ MacArthur, 95.

²⁰ Hughes, 70.

²¹ James Montgomery Boice, *Philippians*, An Expository Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1971), p. 100, referenced in Hughes, 65.